

HIBISCUS ROSA-SINENSIS PLANT NAMED 'SMILEY FACE'

BOTANICAL CLASSIFICATION

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis L.

5

VARIETAL DENOMINATION

The new plant has the varietal denomination 'SMILEY FACE'.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to a new and distinct variety of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L., which was developed in a controlled breeding program in Webster, Texas.

The genus *Hibiscus* comprises about 250 species of herbs, shrubs and trees in warm temperate and tropical regions; with leaves usually simple, mostly palmately veined, lobed or parted; flowers mostly solitary in the leaf axils but sometimes in racemes, corymbs or
15 panicles. *Hibiscus* is included in the family Malvaceae, which comprises about 95 genera of herbs, shrubs and trees originating in tropical and temperate regions. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is a glabrate shrub, seldom over 8 feet tall in cultivation, but treelike to 15 feet or more in tropical regions. Leaves to 6-inches long, ovate, usually serrate, mostly glossy green. Flowers solitary in upper leaf axils.

20 The new *Hibiscus* is a product of a planned breeding program conducted by the inventor in Webster, Texas. The objective of the program was to create new *Hibiscus* selections with improved bloom quality, color and floriferousness, plants that can be commercially produced on their own root systems, and improved plant habit with regard to vigor and postproduction longevity.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The new variety was discovered in a controlled breeding program of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and differs from its parents and other known cultivars of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* by the following characteristics in combination:

1. Upright, compact symmetrical plant habit that is suitable for container production;
2. Healthy green foliage;
3. Vigorous growth habit;
- 5 4. An intense red-orange bloom, spotted and splotched with yellow marks along the outer rim of the flower;
5. Free-flowering.

Asexual reproduction of the new variety by stem cuttings, performed in Webster, Texas and Fulshear, Texas have confirmed that the distinctive characteristics of the new
10 variety are stable and transmitted to succeeding generations, and the new variety reproduces true to type.

COMPARISON WITH PARENTS AND OTHER CULTIVARS

‘Smiley Face’ is distinguished from its female parent ‘Morgan Alyssa’ (not patented)
15 by having a different flower color combination; ‘Morgan Alyssa’ has dark red flowers with numerous white markings. Also, ‘Morgan Alyssa’ does not begin to bloom until it reaches a height of approximately 4 feet, while ‘Smiley Face’ will bloom in a #1 nursery container at a height of 12 inches. ‘Smiley Face’ is distinguished from its male parent ‘Jazz’ (not patented) by a lack of similarity in their flower colors and color patterns; flowers of ‘Jazz’ are orange
20 with a metallic eye and a fuchsia halo, along with many yellow spots. Also, the flower color pattern of ‘Jazz’ is variable from bloom to bloom, while ‘Smiley Face’ has a bloom that is very consistent with its spotting and color. Also, the flowers of ‘Smiley Face’ have a heavier texture than those of ‘Jazz’.

Plants of ‘Smiley Face’ can be compared to plants of the cultivar ‘Golden Dust’ (not
25 patented). However, in side-by-side comparisons conducted in Webster, Texas, plants of ‘Smiley Face’ differ from plants of the cultivar ‘Golden Dust’ in the following characteristics:

1. Flowers of ‘Smiley Face’ are brighter in color than flowers of ‘Golden Dust’;
2. Plants of ‘Smiley Face’ are easier to propagate via vegetative cuttings than
30 plants of the cultivar ‘Golden Dust’;

3. Plants of 'Smiley Face' possess healthier foliage and a better growth habit than the cultivar 'Golden Dust'.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The accompanying illustrations show a specimen of the new cultivar in a photographic illustration as true to color as is reasonably possible to make in an illustration of this character.

5 FIG. 1 illustrates a side perspective view of a typical plant of 'Smiley Face';

FIG. 2 illustrates the scale of a typical flower of 'Smiley Face';

FIG. 3 illustrates the typical young to mature foliage of 'Smiley Face'; the abaxial and adaxial surfaces are shown at each stage; and

10 FIG. 4 illustrates a dissected flower of 'Smiley Face', including shape and size of petals and characteristics of the reproductive structures.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW VARIETY

‘Smiley Face’ has not been observed under all possible environmental, cultural and light conditions. The following observations and descriptions are of plants grown in Fulshear, Texas, in November 2003, under polypropylene shade cloth providing a 30 percent light reduction, and under conditions which closely approximate commercial production. Plants described were approximately one year old and in a #3 nursery container. In this description, color references are to the *Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart* (2000) and terminology used in the color descriptions herein refers to plate numbers in this color chart. Phenotypic expression may vary with light intensity, cultural and environmental conditions.

10 CLASSIFICATION:

Botanical: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L. ‘Smiley Face’

Parentage

Female or Seed Parent: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* ‘Morgan Alyssa’
(not patented)

15 Male or Pollen Parent: *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* ‘Jazz’ (not patented)

Propagation: By stem cuttings

Time to initiate rooting: Approximately 14 to 21 days at 21-24 C

Time to develop roots: Approximately 42 to 56 days at 21-24 C

Root description: Fine to medium; fibrous; freely branching

20 PLANT

Size

Height: Approximately 51 cm from soil level to top of flowers

Diameter/Spread: Approximately 60 cm

25 Form and Growth Habit: Perennial, evergreen shrub; mostly upright and somewhat spreading.

Branching: Freely branching; approximately 4 to 8 lateral branches develop after pinching

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Lateral Branches: Approximately 15 cm long and 4 m
in diameter

Internode Length: Approximately 3 cm

5 LEAF

Shape: Cordate

Apex: Acute

Base: Cordate

Leaf size: Approximately 8.5 cm long and 6 cm wide

10 Arrangement: Alternate, single; symmetrical

Margin: Crenate

Aspect: Undulate

Texture/Substance: Glabrous, shiny

Coloration

15 Young Foliage

Upper side: Near Green Group 137B

Under side: Near Green Group 138B

Mature Foliage

Upper side: Near Yellow-Green Group 147A

20 Under side: Near Yellow-Green Group 147C

Petioles

Size: Approximately 2.5 cm long, 3 mm across

Coloration: Near Green Group 137A

Texture: Smooth

25 Hardiness: USDA Zone 10 (30°F to 40°F)

Pests/Diseases: Resistance to known Hibiscus diseases had
not been observed on plants grown under
conditions approximating commercial
practices.

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INFLORESENCE

	Bloom Period	Typically year-round under subtropical and tropical conditions
5	Flower Arrangement:	Arranged singly at terminal leaf axils; free-flowering with 3 to 4 flower buds and/or open flowers per terminal apex; flowers face upright and slightly outward.
10	Flower Appearance:	An intense red-orange bloom, spotted and splotted with yellow; flowers are open for about two days before closing; flowers persistent.
	Flower Diameter:	Approximately 14 cm
	Buds (just prior to showing color)	
15	Rate of Opening:	Approximately 1 or 2 days, depending on temperature
	Shape:	Elliptic
	Length:	Approximately 3 cm
	Diameter:	Approximately 1.2 cm
	Color:	Near Yellow-Green Group 144A
20	Fragrance:	None noted
	Petals	
	Number/Arrangement:	Corolla consists of 5 overlapping petals
	Shape:	Spatulate with rounded apex
	Size:	Approximately 8 cm long and 8.5 cm wide
25	Margin:	Entire, but ruffled
	Texture:	Smooth

Color

Upper Surface:

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The “eye” or throat starts at near Red Group 46A and transitions to near Orange-Red Group N30A-C throughout the rest of the petal; spotting along the outer edge of the petals range from near Yellow-Orange Group 15B to 15C.

Lower Surface:

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The majority is near Orange-Red Group N34B, eventually fading to near White Group 155B at the base of the petal; outer edges of petals are near Yellow-Orange Group 15D..

Sepals

Number/Arrangement:

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5 sepals fused into a star-shaped calyx

Shape:

Linear with acuminate apices

Margin:

Entire

Color:

Near Yellow-Green Group 144A

Peduncles

Length:

Approximately 4 cm

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Diameter:

Approximately 2 mm

Angle:

Upright to about 45 degrees

Strength:

Strong, flexible

Color:

Near Yellow-Green Group 144A

25 REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

Androecium

Stamens:

Numerous; approximately 50

Stamen Length:

Approximately 5 mm

Filament Color:

Near Red Group 48B

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Anther Size:

Approximately 1 mm

	Pollen Amount:	Abundant
	Pollen Color:	Yellow-Orange Group 15A
	Gynoecium	
	Pistil Length:	Approximately 7 cm
5	Stigma Appearance:	5, rounded
	Stigma Diameter:	Approximately 2 mm
	Stigma Color:	Near Orange-Red Group 34A
	Style Color:	Lower half near Red Group 47A; upper half near Red Group 47D.
10	Seed Production:	Seed production has not been observed